

The CHAIRMAN: Would Mr. Hoey answer that?

Mr. HOEY: I have no hesitation in saying that the policy is uniform at the moment. You have, under discussion, the appointment of Indian agents and the filling of vacancies that occur from time to time. All such appointments come under the Civil Service Commission; but here is what happened: the Indian agent, say, has been twenty-five or thirty years in charge of an agency and has given the best of his life, devotedly and conscientiously; but that man has got to be out six months on retirement leave before the initial steps can be taken to fill his position.

*By Mr. MacNicol:*

Q. Why?

Mr. HOEY: That is according to the existing Civil Service regulations, the laws that this parliament makes. Ever since Confederation a man may get six months' retirement leave; the consequence being there is no salary for his successor, for one thing, and no steps can be taken to replace him. A missionary said to me the other day that he had experienced the utmost difficulty in getting an agent there. He said: these Indians are coming in from the trap lines and there is nobody to supervise the agencies. What would happen in the city of Ottawa if you withdrew, over-night, the forces responsible for the administration of law and order? Property would not be safe; yet we have an agency vacant for months with nobody in charge. That is a very serious matter.

*By Mr. Blackmore:*

Q. Does Mr. Hoey suggest why such a regulation was ever made in the first place?

Mr. HOEY: I would say that two suggestions I would make are: in British Columbia we should have an agent at large, a man who would be attached to the commissioner's office, to take charge of an agency in the case of illness, or after the retirement of an agent, automatically take over the position; or, if an agent be about to retire, say, in July, rather than to wait six months, I think his successor should be appointed three months before the other man goes out. That would be the sensible thing to do.

*By Mr. Matthews:*

Q. Do you mean to say that the position is not even advertised until after six months, and then a selection has to be made, and so on? That is ridiculous.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Was that brought to the attention of the Civil Service committee at the last investigation?

Mr. CHARLTON: There is nothing to stop a temporary appointment being made to cover the interval?

Mr. HOEY: You will appreciate readily that to go out today and get a local selection for a man to whom you can give no assurance that he is going to get permanently a position that must be filled by competition, by open competition, and with the labour market what it is, you simply cannot get such a man; at least I have not been able to secure him.

Mr. MacNICOL: What do you suggest? I think we now have something before us that is of exceptional importance; it seems to me that it is a serious situation that has been presented now; so what would you recommend? The committee is going to make a recommendation by-and-by.

Mr. HOEY: I would recommend the appointment of an agent's successor three months before the man retires, if the members of the committee, in their wisdom, can agree to that; and I should say that provision should be made for his appointment the day the other man goes out.